

Becoming a Better Coach

May 8, 2025 @ Champions Hall, 7-8pm



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU AS A COACH?

Our Goals at ESA for our players:

1. players' enjoyment of soccer
2. improvement of ball skills
3. understanding of the rules of the game
4. playing fairly and learning general game principles



1. Connection



2. Enjoyment



3. Learning

.pause...think, pair,
share

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU AS A COACH?

♦ Player Growth and Development

- “Success is seeing a player become better at life, not just better at the game.”
— *John Wooden*, legendary UCLA basketball coach
- “I want to leave players better than I found them—in skills, confidence, and character.”
— *Emma Hayes*, Chelsea Women FC

♦ Team Culture and Environment

- “Success is building a culture where players care about each other, work for each other, and grow together.”
— *Carlo Ancelotti*, Real Madrid
- “My job is to create an environment where people feel safe to be brave.”
— *Gareth Southgate*, England Men’s National Team

♦ Long-Term Impact

- “Success is having former players come back and thank you—not for the goals or the tactics, but for helping them become who they are.”
— *Tony Dungy*, NFL Coach
- “If I’m remembered for the person I helped someone become, that’s success.”
— *Jill Ellis*, U.S. Women’s National Team

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU AS A COACH?

♦ Integrity and Authenticity

- “Coaching success is staying true to your values while adapting to the needs of your players.”
— *Pep Guardiola*, Manchester City
- “It’s not about what I win, but how I lead. Did I do it with integrity?”
— *Gregg Popovich*, San Antonio Spurs

♦ Process over Outcome

- “Winning is the result of doing things the right way. Success is about the process, every day.”
— *Nick Saban*, Alabama Football
- “I define success by how we train, how we communicate, and how we support each other. The results take care of themselves.”
— *Jurgen Klopp*, Liverpool FC

♦ Empowering Others

- “Success is when my players don’t need me anymore—because they’ve become leaders themselves.”
— *Steve Kerr*, Golden State Warriors
- “It’s watching a player take what they learned here and use it somewhere bigger.”
— *Brian McBride*, U.S. Soccer

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU AS A COACH?

1. Who Are These Kids I'm Coaching?
2. How Do I Organize Them?



COACHING Pre-K, K GRADE PLAYERS

PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SHOWN

- Short attention span - tends to one task at a time - Only understand simple rules
- Individually oriented - (me, my, mine) - little or no concern for team activities
- They will dribble and never pass - thats OK!
- Limited understanding of time and space - they often forget what direction they are going!
- Psychologically fragile, easily bruised
- Eye-hand and eye-foot coordination is raw – not ready for bouncing or flighted balls
- Controlling the ball is a complex task; Catching skills not yet developed
- Physical coordination is immature, top heavy – can balance on dominate foot
- Constantly in motion – love to run, jump, roll and climb; No sense of pace – go flat out
- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls are quite similar
- most players cry immediately when something hurts
- Will need you to tie their shoes
- Believes in Santa Claus, but will not discuss with peers – lofty imagination

COACH CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED

- Positive, encouraging, funny, enthusiastic, play with them
- Patience and empathy
- Soft and nurturing, need generous praise
- present one problem at a time

COACHING 1st-2nd GRADE PLAYERS

PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SHOWN

- Like to show skills – need approval
- Beginning to develop some physical confidence (most can ride a bicycle)
- Lack sense of pace – go flat out, chasing the ball until they drop
- Still in motion – twitching, jerking, scratching and blinking are all second nature physical movements
- Still into running, jumping, climbing and rolling
- Boys and girls are still quite similar in physical and psychological development
- Attention span is a bit longer than the U-6 age group
- Developing playmates
- More into imitation of the big guys (sports heroes becoming important)
- Still very sensitive – Dislikes personal failure in front of peers, making open ridicule in front of team destructive
- Still do not believe in the intensity of the team at all costs
- Inclined more toward small group activities

COACH CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED

- Sensitive teacher, facilitator, patient, enthusiastic, imaginative, able to demonstrate, understand technique and preferably young at heart.

COMPONENTS OF THE GAME FOR 1st-2nd GRADE PLAYERS

- **Technique:** Experiment with the qualities of a rolling or spinning ball. Introduce ball lifting, juggling, block tackle, receiving ground balls with the inside and sole of the foot, shooting with the inside of the foot, toe passing and shooting and dribbling while changing direction. Introduce the push pass.
- **Fitness:** Agility, eye-foot and eye-hand coordination, balance, leaping, bounding, tumbling, catching, throwing, pulling, pushing. Continue education on sports nutrition with players and parents.
- **Psychology:** Encourage working in pairs, sportsmanship, parental involvement, how to play, emotional management, creativity, dynamic activities, participation of all players in a safe and fun environment. There is still a short attention span unless the player has peaked (keep interest high). Like to show what they can do – encourage trying new things. Developing self-esteem – activities should foster positive feedback and attainable positive success.
- **Tactics:** Back line and forward line, 1v1 attack and choosing to dribble or pass. Introduce the names of positions (backs, midfielders and forwards). Institute games of 2v1, 1v2 and 2v2, playing with the ball with a purpose and promote problem solving.

COACHING 3rd-4th GRADE PLAYERS

PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SHOWN

- Lengthened attention span - they are still in motion, but not as busy, only holding still long enough for a short explanation
- More inclined toward wanting to play rather than being told to play
- Psychologically becoming slightly more firm and confident
- Some are becoming serious about their play
- Team oriented – prefer team type balls and equipment. Enjoy the uniforms and team association.
- Boys and girls beginning to develop separately
- Developing the pace factor – thinking ahead
- Gross and small motor skills becoming much more refined

COACH CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED

- Positive, encouraging, funny
- Patience and empathy
- Role model, someone to look up to
- Inspirational to bring out the best in each player

COMPONENTS OF THE GAME FOR 3rd-4th GRADE PLAYERS

- **Technique:** Experiment with the qualities of a bouncing ball and running with the ball, passing with the inside and outside of the foot (emphasis on quality push pass), instep/laces drive, receiving ground balls with the inside and outside of foot, receiving bouncing balls with the laces (cushion) and the sole, inside and outside of foot (wedge), fakes in dribbling and turning with the ball. Practice throw-ins. For goalkeepers: ready stance, getting the feet set, how to hold a ball after a save, diamond grip, catching shots at the keeper, recovery from down to the ground and up to set position and footwork exercises. Also introduce goal kicks and throwing.
- **Fitness:** Factors are endurance, range of motion flexibility, rhythm exercises and running mechanics. Any fitness activities must be done with the ball. Introduce body resistance exercises and the idea of cool down.
- **Psychology:** Keep soccer enjoyable to foster a desire to play using self-motivation. Working in groups of three, four or five, stay focused for one entire half. There is an increase in responsibility, sensitivity, awareness of how to win or lose gracefully, fair play, parental involvement, how to play, communication and emotional management.
- **Tactics:** 1v1 defending, roles of 1st attacker and defender, 2v1 attacking, what it means to get goal-side, small group shape in pairs and threes (emphasize support on both attack and defense), playing on and around the ball as a group with purpose, playing a variety of positions to develop the complete player, introduce the principles of attack and set plays.

COACHING 5th-6th GRADE PLAYERS

PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SHOWN

- Better able to deal with flighted balls
- Can sequence thoughts and actions to perform more complex tasks
- Can use abstract thought to meet the demands of the game
- Should be able to simultaneously run, strike the ball and think
- Fertile period to learn – full of eagerness
- Important psychosocial implications for a child entering puberty
- Popularity influences self-esteem
- Improved coordination
- Significant physical differences exist between the genders now
- Strength and power becoming factors in their performance

COACHING

Continue teaching the principles of attack and defense, and provide opportunities for players to experience a variety of positions. When attacking, players should work on keeping possession of the ball but should also be taught that possession play is a means to penetrating to the opponents' goal and not an end in itself. Training the players on combination play, such as wall passes, take-overs and overlaps will aid them in keeping the ball long enough to set up a good attack. Work on improving their small group play in 2v1, 1v2 (emphasis on improvisation), 2v2, 3v1 and 3v3. The objective by the end of this age group is to play well in 5v5 situations.

COACHING THE GAME 5TH-6TH GRADE PLAYERS

When Attacking, all players are involved but with an awareness of cover/support by the goalkeeper and at least one covering field player. Develop an understanding of the roles that players have in supporting the attack; i.e.: the player with the ball (1st attacker), players providing immediate support (2nd attacker(s)) of the ball and other players (3rd attacker(s)) who create length (depth) and unbalance (width) the defense. All this needs to be shown in an environment with greater numbers of teammates and opponents on a larger playing field.

When Defending, all players participate, even the players farthest up the field, getting goal-side of the opposing players. Continue to develop and show the principles of defending so that all players gain an understanding of defensive roles. Demonstrate the roles of players that delay (put pressure on the ball – (1st defender), the players that provide support (cover – 2nd defender(s)) and the players that provide balance (depth – 3rd defender(s)).

COACHING GAMES

“Create an environment which supports and guides players toward giving their best contribution to the game in order to further develop and score more goals than the opponent.”

COACHING GAMES

PRE-GAME COACH COMPETENCIES

1. Organize & prepare = lineup, sub rotations
2. Connect w/ players as they arrive
3. Communicate team game objectives

GAME COACH COMPETENCIES

1. Create a positive energy environment!
2. Demonstrate a basic understanding of attacking, defending & transition
3. Support players playing freely
4. Balance silent observation w/ verbal feedback

POST GAME COACH COMPETENCIES

- Check in on players' well being AND Give positive feedback on game objectives

REFLECT ON OWN BEHAVIOR FOR SUCCESS!

2ND GRADE AND OLDER



PARENTS on opposite side of teams

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Structure of the Game

What makes soccer, soccer (structure, goals, and characteristics)?



WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF SOCCER? WHAT HAPPENS IN EVERY GAME?

ATTACKING

LOSING THE BALL

DEFENDING

WINNING THE BALL

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE GAME? WHY DO WE ATTACK AND DEFEND?

SCORING/PREVENTING MORE GOALS THAN THE OPPONENT

ATTACKING

Move the ball forward
Create chances
Score goals

DEFENDING

Prevent the ball from going forward
Deny chances
Prevent goals

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GAME? WHAT MAKES SOCCER, SOCCER?

Unpredictable (therefore the players have to read the game and make decisions)
Directional
Use of the feet (technical)
Free flowing (attacking, defending, transition)
Laws of game/rules

Burning Questions...

- ▶ How do I keep my players on the field engaged during the game?
- ▶ What should I be saying to them before, during, after the game?
- ▶ Share your burning coaching question...

GAME DAY - PRO-TIPS

Create a Consistent and Specific Message: behaviors leading to success

1. Keep the Ball away from the opponent
2. Get the Ball back in 5 seconds when you lose it
3. Play your hearts out

Relationships: Your tone & body language create 93% of the received message. Content is 7%.

Our Objective: In attack, To 1) move the ball forward, 2) create chances & 3) score. In defense, to 1) stop the opponent from moving the ball forward, 2) deny goal scoring chances, and 3) prevent goals.

Defending: Use 1-Word Commands: 1) UP!, 2) DROP!, 3) SHIFT! (TOWARDS THE BALL)!

Encourage Players to make Decisions.

Decisions = immediate player feedback = success/failure = growth

SUBSTITUTION TIPS AND WARMUP RECO'S

There is no perfect strategy/system for subbing players in a game. The objective is to create a safe and positive environment for players to learn and grow and solve problems during the game to help their team try and score more goals than the opponent.

Strength down the Spine:

Playing Time: everyone plays $\frac{1}{2}$ a game each day

Manage players on sideline by engaging them into the team and/or player development strategy. Or use another parent to help you, if needed.

Our Objective: Put players in positions to be successful

When Situations Arise...How can I prevent a bad outcome?

- Be at your best when coaching
- Ask for help when you need it
- Know Your Triggers
- In the heat of the moment...stay calm



How do my players get better?

1. Spring Academy Program, Saturdays May-June
2. Team(s) Practice option?
3. Individual Soccer At Home
(team challenges and 1v1/2v2 with friends/family members!)
4. Summer Camps with FootHolde!

COACH COMMUNITY GROUP

For coaching pro-tips, curriculum materials, practice session activities...

